Course Description:

This creative writing workshop is an introduction to writing for screens; thus, no previous screenwriting experience is required though knowledge of how storytelling works will be an asset. While reading and analyzing exemplary screenplays and writing their own short scripts, students will acquire such tools as: writing effective dialogue, creating dramatic scenes, and characterization; introducing, sustaining and resolving conflict; writing while using applicable formatting software. Importantly, students will learn to critique, discuss, and improve their screenplays as well as those of their peers through the workshop experience.

Over the course of the term, students will:

- Read, critically analyze, and discuss assigned scripts
- Watch, critically analyze, and discuss assigned films (in relation to the scripts)
- Learn to edit and revise their own work, and that of their peers
- Write a number of targeted exercises to help students generate ideas and become acquainted with screenwriting formatting and its applicable software
- Write a short screenplay of 10-12 pages

Portfolio Guidelines:
• Please read carefully!

• Email a 10-12 page sample of your screenwriting or creative writing (fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, etc.) to english@carleton.ca by Monday, July 30, 2018. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission.

• Include your name, student number, and Carleton email address.

• This sample should be formatted to the best of your ability if it is a screenplay and may be an excerpt from a longer piece.

• If you wish, you can include samples from more than one piece of writing, but please remain within the page limits.

• Include a few lines of context or “bridging” information if the piece is an excerpt (so that I can easily understand at which point I am joining the action, etc).

• Include a brief biographical statement answering such questions as: Do you have any background in creative writing, screenwriting, or other forms of writing? Have you ever taken a creative writing or screenwriting workshop? If so, when and what was the workshop? What is your major and/or minor? Why do you want to take this workshop and what do you hope to gain from it? This statement should be about 250 words (one double-space typed page).

• I will evaluate the portfolios and contact students by Monday, August 7, 2018, advising whether or not they have been selected. As there is no guarantee students will be admitted, it is recommended that students choose an alternate course.

• Once I have a list of those who will be admitted into the workshop, the administration in the Department of English will send you an email telling you a spot has been opened up for you. At this time you can go ahead and register.

• Please email me any questions you may have.

Course Outline

Weekly Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Topic</th>
<th>Read/ Discuss</th>
<th>Watching</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Sept 5:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td><em>The Karman Line</em></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course outline; Choose workshops and presentations; discuss the short vs. the feature</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><em>Bible</em>: 3-36; 147-165</td>
<td><em>Witness</em></td>
<td>Visual Writing Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Sept 12:</td>
<td>Presentations: 1-3</td>
<td><em>Russian Roulette</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure/Turning Points/ Plot Points/ Character</td>
<td>Workshop Assignments: 1-4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><em>Bible</em>: 36-82; 185-207</td>
<td><em>The Fly</em></td>
<td>Character Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Sept 19:</td>
<td>Presentations: 4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story-layering/ Plot/ Genre/ Character/ Theme</td>
<td>Workshop Assignments: 5-8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td><em>Bible</em>: 82-92; 207-229</td>
<td><em>Juno</em></td>
<td>Dialogue Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Sept 26:</td>
<td>Presentations: 7-8</td>
<td><em>Actor Seeks Role</em></td>
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<td>Dialogue/ subtext/ exposition</td>
<td>Workshop Assignments: 9-12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><em>Bible</em>: 92-109; 165-185</td>
<td><em>Whiplash</em></td>
<td>Dramatic Tension Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Oct 3:</td>
<td>Presentations 9-10</td>
<td>(Short and feature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scenes</td>
<td>Workshop Assignments: 13-16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><em>Bible</em>: 113-133</td>
<td><em>La Jetée</em></td>
<td>Dream/ No Dialogue Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Oct 10:</td>
<td>Presentations: 11-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Logline due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review so far… getting started on our own scripts</td>
<td>Workshop Assignments: 17-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td>Workshop loglines and pitches – ALL</td>
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<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bible: 241-303</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
<td>Do the Right Thing</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Oct 31:</td>
<td>Bible: 241-303</td>
<td>Presentations: 15-16</td>
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<td>Workshop drafts: 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Bible: 241-303</td>
<td>Laredo, Texas</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 7:</td>
<td>Presentations: 17-18</td>
<td>Meshes of the Afternoon</td>
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<td>Workshop drafts: 4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Presentations: 19-20</td>
<td>Points of Origin</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Nov 14:</td>
<td>Bible: 241-303</td>
<td>James</td>
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<td>Workshop drafts: 7-9</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Workshop drafts: 10-13</td>
<td>Frozen River</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 21:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Workshop drafts: 14-17</td>
<td>City of God</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 28:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Workshop drafts: 18-20</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Workshop first drafts</td>
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**Note on the workshop dynamic:**

Over the course of the term, students will work towards writing a self-contained screenplay of about 10 pages. While the first half of the term is devoted to getting familiar with the conventions of screenplay writing, the second half is all about workshopping our first drafts as a group.

Here is how it works: on the first day of class we will all sign up for a workshop dates (one date for an assignment, described below, and one date for your screenplay). One week before their appointed dates, students will post their work on CU Learn for the group to read. The rest of the class then has one week to read the posted pieces and comment upon them. On the day of the workshop, we will read through and discuss the comments together as a group.

**Assignments:**

1. **Final, revised draft of a self-contained 10-page short-film screenplay: 40%**

   Logline = 5%
   
   Step out line = 5%
   
   Treatment = 5%
   
   Reflection statement = 5%
   
   Actual revised draft = 20%

   The final, revised draft of your screenplay is due two weeks after it is workshopped in class. Please hand in the screenplay to me (properly formatted) the day it is due.
As revising is the foundation of all writing, the final draft must be accompanied by a 2-page “Reflection Statement,” wherein you describe the process and experience of revising your screenplay in accordance with (or in opposition to) the feedback you received during your workshop. This statement will be written in full sentences (not point form), formatted in Times New Roman 12-point font, and double-spaced.

In your Reflection Statement you might discuss such issues as: your personal reaction to being critiqued by your peers; what you decided to change in your draft and why; what you decided to preserve in your draft and why; what important lessons you learned about your screenwriting skills and what you might change about them moving forward.

2. Writing Assignments: 5 x 6% each = 30%

For the first six weeks, students will complete a weekly 2-page writing assignment. These are intended to get you warmed up, familiarizing you with screenwriting formatting and software, while also stimulating your creativity. You may develop one of these assignments into your final screenplay project.

As this is a workshop, we will take turns sharing the assignments with our peers. Because the class is so large, we will only have time to workshop one assignment per student.

During the first session, students will choose their workshop dates for this assignment.

The week before your assignment is due, you will send it to Nadia (as a properly formatted pdf) to post on CU Learn.

Your peers and I will then read your assignment for the following week. When we meet, we will discuss assignments as a group in the form of a workshop.

3. Presentation: 10%

Each student will sign up for a brief, ten-minute presentation on an assigned topic from the weekly viewing/reading. The presentation will respond directly to the presentation topic and also generate class discuss.

For the sake of time, please be brief and succinct. You do not need a PowerPoint presentation. If you wish to show a clip from a film to illustrate your point, that is fine.

Please hand in your speaking notes, written in clear, grammatically correct prose (point-form is not acceptable.)
Please have two questions ready for the class. These questions should be included in the hardcopy of the presentation you turn in.

3. Participation (editorial feedback given to peers, comments and discussion in class): 20%

As this is a workshop, its success depends largely on students actively participating in group discussions, reading and commenting upon the work of your peers, and offering constructive feedback during workshop critiques. I will evaluate the effort and thought you put into all of these aspects.

*Note on attendance: any student who misses more than three workshops without a documented reason (medical, extenuating family situation) will lose 10% of the final grade

*Note on texting, cell phones, and/or Internet usage during class: I will confiscate your laptop or cell phone (or other distraction) for the duration of that workshop

*Note on late assignments: I deduct 2% per day (including weekends) for late assignments.

A final note: You can expect to devote 7-8 hours a week to this workshop.

Required textbook:


This textbook is available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1 (at Bank, in the Glebe).

Required Software:

Celtx is a screenwriting program for Mac and PC that can be downloaded at Celtx.com
Required Viewing and Reading:

Features – all available on short term loan at the Audiovisual Resource Centre (AVRC), room 460, St. Patrick’s Building


Screenplay will be made available in the AVRC on short-term loan.


http://www.sonyclassics.com/awards-information/whiplash_screenplay.pdf


**Shorts:**

*Actor Seeks Roll.* Screenplay by Ben Nabors. Dir. Michael Tyburski. 2015. Video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efUgTm-bRh4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efUgTm-bRh4)


*Meshes in the Afternoon.* Screenplay by Maya Deren. Dir. Maya Deren and Alexander Hamid. 1943. Film. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSY0TA-ttMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSY0TA-ttMA)


Sites of interest:

New Yorker Screening Room

Film School Shorts

Short of the Week
[https://www.shortoftheweek.com/channels/canada/](https://www.shortoftheweek.com/channels/canada/)
Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).